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RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 7337  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 004145

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SUBJECT: COUNTER-TERRORISM IN TAIWAN: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

Classified By: AIT Acting Director Robert S. Wang,  
Reason 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Taiwan authorities have made a concerted effort since 2005 to establish an island wide counter-terrorism network to reduce stove-piping and competing interests between relevant ministries and agencies that could hamper the government's response in the event of a terrorist attack. The Counter-Terrorism Office (CTO) has been playing an increasingly central role since its establishment in January 2005, tasked with overseeing and coordinating interagency efforts to prevent and respond to terrorist activities in Taiwan and in the region. Over the next year Taiwan will focus on efforts to build CT training programs for civil servants and to enhance security arrangements for the 2009 World Games in Kaohsiung. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Taiwan authorities have made a concerted effort since 2005 to establish an island wide counter-terrorism network to reduce stove-piping and competing interests between relevant ministries and agencies that could hamper the government's response to a terrorist attack. Counter-Terrorism Office (CTO) Director Kuo Lin-wu on December 12 told AIT that the CTO has been playing an increasingly central role since its establishment in January 2005, overseeing and coordinating interagency efforts to prevent and respond to terrorist activities in Taiwan and in the region. The CTO has an 18-member staff comprised of representatives from ten government agencies, including the National Security Bureau (NSB), the National Police Administration (NPA), the Department of Health and the Atomic Energy Council. The CTO reports to the Executive Yuan (EY) Secretary-General and it also serves as a liaison between the

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National Security Council (NSC), intelligence services, and the rest of the EY bureaucracy. Kuo told AIT that his office has made some progress in increasing cooperation among government agencies, but conceded that more work has to be done to improve coordination and reduce bureaucratic stove-piping.

¶3. (C) Since its inauguration in January 2005, the CTO has conducted several large-scale training exercises. The first,

held in April 2005, tested responses to a terrorist attack against critical infrastructure as well as dealing with a toxic spill. The most recent exercise in December 2006 focused on preliminary security preparations for the 2009 World Games to be held in Kaohsiung. CTO had been coordinating the Yushan military exercises, which focus on crisis management, but this has been shifted to the NSC, NSC Senior Advisor York Chen told AIT last week. The CTO's primary mission remains counter-terrorism, but according to Kuo over the past year its focus has broadened to include crisis management, disaster preparedness, and national emergency mobilization.

¶4. (C) The EY is expected to complete the establishment of a Counter-Terrorism Training Center under the Ministry of the Interior by 2008 to enhance CT training opportunities for civil servants and officials. According to Kuo, the center is modeled on Indonesia, with which Taiwan plans to establish a close exchange on CT-related issues. Other CT initiatives the CTO is planning over the next year include enhancing cyber security, studying protection of critical infrastructure, enforcing export controls of sensitive technologies, and moving forward on the mega ports initiative. Pending legislation to establish a Department of Homeland Security, he explained, is part of a larger government restructuring bill, but is unlikely to make any progress in 2007 given the polarization of the legislature between the ruling and opposition parties.

¶5. (C) Comment. Taiwan authorities and the CTO will need foreign assistance as Taiwan seeks to develop counter-terrorisim capabilities. We believe that this could be an important area where the U.S. can expand its cooperation with Taiwan in the global effort to combat

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terrorism. In particular, we plan to consult with Taiwan on its preparations for the upcoming 2009 World games. End  
Comment.

WANG